

# The Brethren Evangelist,

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## CHRISTMAS.

Among the happy seasons of the year, perhaps none bring more true joy and gladness into human hearts than this festive day, known as Christmas. And why should it not? The day of Christianity began with rejoicing. It was ushered in with a song that brought joy and peace to sin burdened souls. "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace, good-will to men." Christmas is one of those days in whose joy all seem to share. Even those who have not formally accepted and appropriated the salvation which Jesus offers, share something—may we hope much—of that joy which came into human hearts when Jesus was born at Bethlehem so long ago. How many thousands of people, yea, millions, have been made to rejoice and be glad in the blessed peace of him whose coming into the world we celebrate on this happy festive day.

Yet there are hearts that will be sad even amid the festivities which the day will bring with it. Many have been the changes during the year. Things are not as they were. And while we may be happy amid friends and pleasant associations, our memories go back and linger among the things of the past. Friends are missing; there are vacant places in the home, and a feeling of sadness fills the heart as we recall the former associations.

But even in these circumstances we may be cheerful. These environments cannot disturb the peace of those who rest in God. Let there be joy on this day, joy in the heart, joy in the home.

It is at this period when preparations are being made to have a "pleasant time" on Christmas day. Sunday-Schools are getting ready for their annual "entertainments," while parents are looking toward a happy time for the little ones. In all these preparations one thing must not be overlooked—

*the religious element*, which should be the most prominent feature in our Christmas services. Whether in the church or in the home, *Christ* should be first and last in all we do. Hold up *Jesus*—he is the author of this day, he gives it the happy thoughts and pleasant associations, that come with it. Honor him, love him, serve him, obey him. And whether we give or receive gifts, let us cherish in our hearts and minds the great gift God gave to the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

## REVERENCES.

Reverence may be defined as an act of respect and veneration. Coleridge says it is the synthesis of love and fear. In a wider sense we may say that reverence is the act of respect or veneration we show toward that which is intended to be religious in its nature.

Reverence is a christian virtue. Aside from this it is the work of a true lady or gentleman. The word reverence is not found in the Bible, but the principle and act of reverence are taught on every page of holy writ. Sacrilege is irreverence in its advanced stage. A man may be irreverent and not sacrilegious, but sacrilege always implies irreverence. Belshazzar, in desecrating the sacred vessels of the temple, was not only irreverent but sacrilegious. We take this opportunity to warn all young people against this sin of irreverence. It is the first step towards sacrilege. If you have lost your respect for things sacred and fail to regard with due consideration, the faith and devotion of others, then you have lost, not only that which belongs to the Christian, but a very essential characteristic in the make up of a lady or gentleman.

The public as a rule is ready to give its disapproval to all acts of irreverence, but somehow the public seems to have lost the power of discrimination as to what constitutes an act of irreverence. We have known people whose outward life was far from clean, who were by no means moral in their daily walk and conversation, yet had the highest regard for the faith and devotions of others, and for those things which they held as sacred. There is hope for him who shows due respect for things religious and spiritual. We trust the man who can

do homage to anything, out of and greater than himself. Always set a price upon reverence. It means much. Veneration is the basis of all noble and tender and beneficent character. It is an evidence of a great soul. When we see a man enter God's house softly, his hat removed, taking his pew, bowing forward in silent meditation, we feel ourselves in the presence of one whose soul is occupied with heaven's sweet thoughts—a soul full of God.

Irreverence is a very common fault; it is one of those sins which, like covetousness, we may be guilty of, without knowing it. Trivial talk during the hours of religious service, loud laughter in God's house, sport, boisterousness—these are out of place in the house made sacred by the reading of God's holy Word and hallowed by the prayers of God's people. These acts are entirely too common in our Sunday schools. It is, in our judgment, an act of irreverence, to go to the house of God and sleep during the time when the Gospel of Jesus is being proclaimed. It is not meant that worshippers in God's house must put on a long face, look as if going to a funeral, or as if the universe were draped in mourning. Looking serious is not necessarily reverence. Christian worshippers should be pleasant, joyous, hopeful, happy, but withal reverent, with a full sense of the divine presence. Coming to the Lord's house in this spirit, we shall be the nobler, kindlier, purer, and better for having bowed the knee in holy reverence before our Maker. Whatever you do, *be reverent*. At all times and under all circumstances, at all places, *be reverent*.

## THE MINISTER'S WIFE.

What is the relation of a minister's wife to the congregation of which her husband is pastor? What relation does she bear to the church? Man and wife being one, does the church hire her, when they hire him? Or does she bear the same relation to the church as any other member? For the benefit of ministers' wives and others we give the following by a "minister's wife" in the *Advance*:

"Can it be the idea is abroad that when a minister is hired to serve a church the minister's wife is thrown in as a 'perquisite of the church?' I, a minister's wife, protest. When my husband makes a contract with a church, *my services are not included*. Why